

A
SERMON,
DELIVERED AT THE
ORDINATION
OF THE
REV. LUTHER WRIGHT,
TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE FIRST
CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN
MEDWAY,
JUNE 13, 1798.

BY MOSES ADAMS, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN ACTON. 4

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
THE CHARGE,
By the Rev. Mr. BRIDGE, of EAST-SUDBURY,
AND THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
By the Rev. Mr. PRENTISS, of MEDFIELD.

Dedham :

PRINTED BY MANN AND ADAMS.

1798.

199

THE exercises at Mr. WRIGHT's Ordination, and their order, were as follows:

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER, by the Rev. Mr. THATCHER, of *Dedham*.

SERMON, by the Rev. Mr. ADAMS, of *Acton*.

CONSECRATING PRAYER, by the Rev. Mr. CHICKERING, of *Dedham*.

CHARGE, by the Rev. Mr. BRIDGE, of *East-Sudbury*.

CONCLUDING PRAYER, by the Rev. Mr. RIPLEY, of *Concord*; and

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, by the Rev. Mr. PRENTISS, of *Medfield*.

“THE town of Medway was incorporated in October, 1713.

THE REV. DAVID DEMING, who was the first minister of Medway, was ordained in November, 1715, and dismissed September 24, 1722.

THE REV. NATHAN BUCKNAM was ordained December 23, 1724, and died February 6, 1795.

THE REV. BENJAMIN GREEN was ordained June 25, 1788, colleague with the Rev. Mr. BUCKNAM, and was dismissed February 28, 1793.”





A S E R M O N.

ISAIAH L. 7.

*For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not
be confounded : therefore have I set my face like
a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*

THE ministers of religion are placed in a truly difficult and often dangerous station ; but, thanks be to God, they have great encouragements, in the holy scriptures, to expect divine assistance and support in pursuing their duty. While they exercise great meekness, patience and forbearance, they must also, in some cases, discover much firmness and resolution, both in doing and suffering the will of God. Such were the temper and conduct of our Lord, when on earth, as appears from every part of his history. The words of our text are to be considered as his ; for the prophet introduces them in language, which has always been applied to him, and will hardly apply to any other : “ I gave my back to the

smelters, and my cheeks to them, that plucked off the hair ; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." In the view of such trials and sufferings, he proceeds, trusting in God, to say, "I have set my face like a flint."—Without going into a critical examination of the figure here used, we are clearly taught by the expression, that our Lord, before he entered upon his ministry, resolved to be deterred by no dangers, from prosecuting the work, which he had undertaken. The event verified his declaration.

MINISTERS of the gospel should make Christ their pattern in all things, wherein he is imitable by them ; those in particular, who are entering upon the work, should count the cost, and be satisfied, that they are honestly disposed and firmly resolved to make duty their object, though difficulties and dangers should attend them in abundance. My subject will now lead me,

I. To make some general observations upon the firmness and resolution, which ministers must some times exercise.

II. To detail instances in which we ought to employ them. And,

III. To consider the encouragements faithful ministers may expect, while they religiously pursue their duty.

I. FIRMNESS and resolution do not imply obstinacy, or stubbornness, for which they may have

been mistaken, or with which they may some times be mixed. Where there is the greatest occasion for them, they should be accompanied with candor, with a mind open to conviction, and a readiness to recede from them, as soon as such occasion shall cease. There may be danger, from a desire to support steadiness in sentiment and duty, of contracting a stiffness and austerity, which never appeared in Christ.

THEY should be exercised without passion. Anger and violent resentments have often defeated the best designs, and otherwise good methods, for promoting the good of individuals and of society. In our imperfect state, it is difficult for the best men, always, to keep the temper in due subjection. Events often take place by which ministers, as well as others, are put to severe trial in this matter; and happy is he who can keep his mind serene, on trying occasions. Otherwise he will weaken himself, strengthen opposers, and, probably, find his sincerity suspected, and his influence impaired, if not lost.

IN cases where firmness in opinion and practice is most necessary, it should be accompanied with gentleness of mind and manners. There are few, if any, with whom we have to deal, who will not be more easily induced to comply with us in this way, than in any other. Neither do I consider it inconsistent with "setting the face like a flint," if

we may consider the conduct of Christ, as a just comment upon the text, who was gentle even in those cases where he was most firm and determined.

MUCH prudence is always necessary in instances where we may find ourselves obliged to adhere to opinions, or to pursue particular objects with unremitting perseverance; and such firmness and resolution should not be unnecessarily employed in cases of little, or no importance; in which we should expose ourselves to the imputation of lording it over the faith, or actions of men. From a desire to maintain the true dignity of their office, some may have discovered too much of an unyielding disposition, and been too tenacious of their own opinions and ways, in things of very small importance. I shall now,

II. DETAIL instances in which ministers ought to employ firmness and resolution.

THE truth must never be abandoned by us, but defended with courage. Some truths, or doctrines of revelation, being of more importance than others, claim a more zealous defence. Of the comparative importance of these, every one must judge for himself, and act accordingly. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel, it is presumed, will be considered, by all, as highly momentous. Such as pardon of sin, and acceptance with God through Jesus Christ—the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in the Saviour—and holiness, with-

out which no man can see the Lord. Being satisfied of the truth of any doctrine, we must insist upon it, in proportion to our view of its consequence ; though it may expose us to the reproach and contempt of many. When doctrines have been unpopular, it has often required much resolution in ministers to acquit themselves with fidelity. But we must obey God rather than man. Neither the frowns nor the flatteries of the world may shake us from our steadfastness in maintaining the truth, as it is in Jesus.

WE must "set our faces" also against errors as they appear to be more or less dangerous. Great judgment and prudence are necessary in this. Violence and persecution will not promote truth ; neither will they correct error. Indiscreet attacks upon erroneous persons, have often confirmed them beyond hope of their recovery. In dealing with such, much attention should be paid to disposition and character, to time and circumstances, in order to give the best effect to our endeavours. Instances, indeed, may occur, in which the most good is to be expected from our entire silence ; as there are some, who are more likely to be convinced by their own reflections, than by any arguments, which can be used with them. And though it is an evidence of much pride in them, it is better they should be reclaimed in their own way, than not at all. In the mean time, we

should avoid every thing, on our part, which might be considered as approbation of their errors; and by a steady adherence to what we consider as truth, give unequivocal evidence of our attachment to it. But occasions there are, in which we are bound, with boldness and zeal, tempered with prudence, to oppose the introduction and prevalence of errors; especially when, in their nature, they tend, not only to invalidate the most important doctrines of our holy religion, but to destroy all religion, natural and revealed—such errors no doubt there are.

WE must set ourselves against sin in all its forms. And being imperfect, and frail ourselves, we should, in the first place, guard our own hearts with unremitting fortitude against the assaults of every sin, and especially against those, which most easily beset us; lest, in any measure, we weaken our opposition to others. Publicly and privately we must bear testimony against iniquity, in old and young, in high and low. So did our Saviour: none escaped his reproof, on account of their elevation in life. Much resolution is often necessary in administering rebuke, &c. to those, who are distinguished in the world; though unhappily it may be necessary to such, as often as to any. Ministers should discover their determined opposition to vice, by lives far removed from it, and by uniform examples of godliness. These

will do more towards weakening the reign of sin in the world, and promoting the cause of religion, than the best sermons without them.

MINISTERS have need to exercise resolution and firmness, in meeting the conduct of the world towards them. Their dangers in this respect are very different. Some stand so high in the good opinion of the public, and of their own people in particular, as to have much to fear from flattery, which few can withstand. When the ear is frequently filled with adulation, the heart will naturally swell with pride, perhaps spiritual pride, the worst of all. Those, who are exposed to this, should with fortitude "set their faces" against it, because it is an attack upon that side which is weak in every man; because the flatterer is ever to be suspected; because it endangers their own piety; and may place them upon a precipice, from which they may fall with abundant loss.

SOME have greater occasion to exercise fortitude against the calumny with which they are assaulted. Far be it from me to say, that we never expose ourselves to just censure; too many unhappy instances have existed to the contrary! But many good men in the office have had severe trials from the tongue of slander. And while there are wicked, envious men, such evils may be expected. Our Saviour himself did not escape. The disci-

ple may expect to be as his Lord in this. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, those of the household may not expect to escape reproach. Few indeed are wholly exempt. We should put on courage when we enter, and stand upon a field where many arrows will probably be aimed at us. Others, again, have to endure the coldness of friends, as well as the reproaches of enemies. And here one of the sharpest trials of ministers is found. Some have had occasion to adopt the words of the psalmist—"It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." Our Lord had respect to the indifference of his friends, as well as to the persecutions of his enemies, when he said, "I have set my face like a flint," to meet them with firmness. In similar cases we should faint, unless we did likewise.

In things of a worldly and temporal nature, fortitude is not unfrequently necessary to ministers. In common with other men we are subject to the calamities of life. We are more dependant for our support than other classes of men in general. This dependance has been felt most sensi-

bly by many ministers of late. For the last twenty years and more, such has been the fluctuating state of our stipends, that many have been reduced to great difficulties. Some have borne them with surprizing patience; others have sought and obtained relief; while others again have sought and failed: but, who have manifested the Christian fortitude, I shall not attempt to determine. Some, indeed, with pleasure be it spoken, have escaped the evil, through the justice and liberality of their people. When ministers are so straitened in their circumstances, as to interrupt the duties of their office, they need great firmness of mind and of body to endure their trials, and to perform their labors.

FIRMNESS and resolution may be incumbent upon us in the affairs of society. Among our particular acquaintance and neighbors we may have frequent calls to interpose as mediators and peacemakers; often an ungrateful service. The difficulty and delicacy of this service may by no means excuse us, especially when Christian brethren are at odds. And, when occasion requires, we must practice that discipline upon delinquents, which the gospel has prescribed.

As members of society at large, I know not why we may not take an active, and decided part, when the rights of men, or of conscience are in danger. The interest of religion and of civil soci-

ple may expect to be as his Lord in this. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, those of the household may not expect to escape reproach. Few indeed are wholly exempt. We should put on courage when we enter, and stand upon a field where many arrows will probably be aimed at us. Others, again, have to endure the coldness of friends, as well as the reproaches of enemies. And here one of the sharpest trials of ministers is found. Some have had occasion to adopt the words of the psalmist—"It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." Our Lord had respect to the indifference of his friends, as well as to the persecutions of his enemies, when he said, "I have set my face like a flint," to meet them with firmness. In similar cases we should faint, unless we did likewise.

IN things of a worldly and temporal nature, fortitude is not unfrequently necessary to ministers. In common with other men we are subject to the calamities of life. We are more dependant for our support than other classes of men in general. This dependance has been felt most sensi-

bly by many ministers of late. For the last twenty years and more, such has been the fluctuating state of our stipends, that many have been reduced to great difficulties. Some have borne them with surprizing patience; others have sought and obtained relief; while others again have sought and failed: but, who have manifested the Christian fortitude, I shall not attempt to determine. Some, indeed, with pleasure be it spoken, have escaped the evil, through the justice and liberality of their people. When ministers are so straitened in their circumstances, as to interrupt the duties of their office, they need great firmness of mind and of body to endure their trials, and to perform their labors.

FIRMNESS and resolution may be incumbent upon us in the affairs of society. Among our particular acquaintance and neighbors we may have frequent calls to interpose as mediators and peacemakers; often an ungrateful service. The difficulty and delicacy of this service may by no means excuse us, especially when Christian brethren are at odds. And, when occasion requires, we must practice that discipline upon delinquents, which the gospel has prescribed.

As members of society at large, I know not why we may not take an active, and decided part, when the rights of men, or of conscience are in danger. The interest of religion and of civil soci-

ety appear to me to be so nearly connected, that I see not how a friend to the former can avoid feeling deeply interested in the latter. When we see our country in danger of arbitrary government, or of foreign subjugation or influence, or of anarchy and confusion, may we not, must we not sound the alarm? Did not the prophets, our Lord and his apostles warn the people of approaching dangers, though by so doing they exposed themselves to much reproach and to many sufferings? The ministers of this land have heretofore been thought to deserve well of their country, for their patriotic firmness in the cause of civil and religious liberty. I believe they are as well disposed now; though so many are ready to deny it. As it is conceived that our land and liberties are in imminent danger at this time, it is more than ever perhaps important, that we should set our faces against those politics which are so highly dangerous to church and state. It is to me matter of much satisfaction, that so many of my fathers and brethren have been exerting themselves, and I trust not without effect, in a cause, which involves the dearest interests of ourselves, of our children, of the state, the church of God and of the world. For if religion and liberty be lost in America, where will they find a sanctuary under the sun!—I pass,

III. To consider the encouragements faithful ministers may expect, while religiously pursuing their duty.

THESE are not always found in temporal reward ; nor in the good effects of our labors upon the hearts and lives of our people. Some however there are in every place, who are willing that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel ; and many in our land, who, notwithstanding the degeneracy of the times, by their justice and generosity, by their serious attendance upon instruction, and by godly lives and conversation, greatly encourage the hearts of their teachers. But where these are wanting, there are encouragements ; we find them in our text. “ The Lord God will help me.” He will help his faithful servants to know and to do their duty : being commissioned and sent by him, he will not leave them utterly, when they call upon him. From the world they may meet with tribulation, but in him they shall have peace. He will help them to endure trials to which they may be called, and to oppose with Christian fortitude the spiritual enemies of themselves and of the church, as good soldiers under Christ their great captain. He may leave them at times to walk in darkness, and to the rage of persecution. So he left his Son, who said, “ my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” So he left his ancient servants ; but it was only to revisit them with increased joy. They may adopt the language of Christ before us, “ therefore I shall not be confounded—and I know

that I shall not be ashamed." If God be for us, who shall be against us? The powers of earth and hell combined cannot fight against God and prosper. The faithful servant of the Lord, who keepeth a good conscience, is secure from shame, and eventually shall triumph. Such encouragements have ministers, not only from our text, but from the general tenor of scripture, as it relates to them—from what we know of the power and goodness of God—from his promises—from the testimony of old and new-testament ministers—and, I trust, from the experience of numbers of his servants present. But though our ministry should be attended with many difficulties, and conflicts, and what is most of all melancholy, though we should be unsuccessful,—yet, if we be faithful, we may find support in the words of the prophet: "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and God shall be my strength."

To my fellow laborers, who are present, I beg leave to say:—We have been called into the work in trying times, and have been encountering more difficulties, than have usually fallen to the lot of ministers in former days. You will join with me, then, in grateful acknowledgments, that having obtained help, we continue to this time. You will readily perceive, also, that we may not think of putting off the harness. Difficulties and

dangers, I fear, await us, greater than those we have passed. The enemies of our order and of religion are multiplying, and are emboldened by the example of a nation, in which infidelity and atheism are triumphant, and in which immense pains are taken to destroy every vestige of Christianity.* We appear to be on the verge of war, against our will, with that nation, from which we had reason to expect very different treatment. War must be very injurious to our young republic; and, of all classes of citizens, none have so much reason to dread and deprecate it as ministers. But, I believe, as a nation, we have more to fear from the principles, than from the arms of France. In opposing these principles, we certainly act within our sphere, as those must allow, who unjustly deny us the common right of citizens, in canvassing political subjects—and we must oppose them. The difficulty of doing it with effect, I am sensible, is much increased by the prejudices of some good men, who have been unwilling to relinquish a hope, which we all perhaps once entertained, that France was introducing pure religion and pure liberty into that part of the world, where

* *The alteration of the calendar, by the French, whereby they have wholly excluded the Sabbath as a day of rest—the entire neglect of religious worship among them—and of the name of God in all their publications, of rejoicing, &c. substituting Fortune, Fate, Destinies and the like in its place, are evidences not only of the deism, but atheism of the nation, at which every serious mind must be alarmed.*

superstition, bigotry and tyranny had so long reigned ; and who still are carried away with the delusion, when it is evident that she is engaged against religion, and is exercising the most arbitrary government, under the specious pretext of liberty. But we must, Sirs, set ourselves against open and secret attacks upon religion, praying God, that we may be neither "confounded," nor "ashamed" in so doing. My young friend, who is about to take part with us in this ministry, will add strength, I hope, to those who are watching, and praying, and striving against irreligion and error.

You, Sir, are entering into office at a period peculiarly discouraging. Many things conspire to render the work arduous ; such as, the lukewarmness of Christians—the prevalence of immorality—the increase of dangerous errors—the spirit of the times, which creates and promotes much bitterness in society, highly unfavorable to religion—the danger of foreign influence, particularly as to Christianity—the many attacks, which are made upon our order, and the abuse, which is offered to it in certain publications—the threats of persecution, which some have uttered, and the wishes of others, that we may meet the same treatment, which has been dealt to the clergy in France. As these things have not escaped your notice, you are entitled to the more praise in offering yourself

to the service of God in his church. I rejoice with you, that your prospect, as it respects the people of this place, is so encouraging. Their unanimity and cordiality afford pleasing hope, that your ministry will be pleasant to you, and useful to them. But we cannot always calculate from present appearances. Untoward events may wholly reverse your expectations. I hope these events will not be found in your misconduct, or in the caprice of your people. But if your popularity should decrease; if opposition should arise against you; and if those, who now profess to be your warmest friends, should become indifferent, yea and inimical towards you, notwithstanding your fidelity and even for your fidelity, let me tell you, it will be no new case. In such events, however, always examine yourself, lest you should have given offence inadvertently, or imprudently. I wish you a long and happy ministry. You cannot expect it will be as long, as was the venerable BUCKNAM's,* whose praise was, and still is in this, and in all the churches: but I hope it will be much longer and less unhappy than your immediate predecessor's. Let not your heart despond at the difficulties and dangers attendant upon the ministry. I have mentioned some of them, with a particular view to you, that you may feel your

" Rev. Nathan Bucknam was ordained December 23, 1724, and died February 6, 1795, in the 92d year of his age, and in the 71st year of his ministry."*

dependence upon God, and in earnest look to him, who is our help, to keep you from shame, and to make you like a flint, like a mighty rock against those, who may rise to oppose and overthrow the cause of God and religion in the world. May God Almighty be with you, my brother.

I GREET the church and people of this place, who are about to enjoy the stated preaching and administration of the ordinances of the gospel, by one, whom I can heartily recommend to them. From long and intimate acquaintance with your pastor elect, I have reason to believe, that he is devoting himself to this work in love to Christ and religion. I trust he will answer your expectations, and prove a blessing to you and your children. At the same time, I solicit your candor towards him, in all things. Never examine him, his preaching, or conduct, with the jaundiced eye of prejudice. From your character, I am induced to hope, that while he is faithful in spiritual things, you will impart to him of your abundant temporal things, as justice and his real occasions may require; never availing yourselves of those subterfuges, which have too often been sought, when justice between minister and people has been discussed. Never add to the difficulties, which always attend the ministry, by countenancing those who have an interest in disorganizing church and state. Pray for your minister, if you wish him to be useful and happy. Attend upon his ministry

constantly. If any thing takes place, at which you are grieved, or offended, converse with him in a spirit of meekness, which is the spirit of Christ, before you yield to the power of prejudice, and before you vent your resentments to others. I hope better things of you, than to suspect, that any of you will ever take part with the open enemies of the cross of Christ. May the head of the church build you up, under your new pastor, and make you a people to his praise in this world, and individually monuments of his grace in the kingdom of glory.

My Christian fellow-citizens of this numerous assembly. I rejoice in the evidence given by your attendance with us, that you respect the institutions of Christ. You have heard something of the difficulties attending the ministerial office. Let me request you to afford us every proper assistance, in our duties and trials ; which you can do in no way so effectually, as by loving and practising religion yourselves. The gospel is an inestimable treasure. The benefits resulting from the administration of it in this land have been incalculably great, not only to the souls of men, but to the best interests of society. If deep-laid plans have been formed to overthrow religion and liberty, as we have reason to fear, how carefully should we guard the sacred deposit, which came from God, and has been handed down to us by our fathers through innumerable dangers and sufferings ? Shall

we ever abandon it? God forbid! Your attendance on this solemnity is, I flatter myself, a pledge, that you will, by your prayers, and every method which Providence may direct, "set your faces like a flint," with ours, against every thing tending to corrupt and destroy Christianity, or its useful handmaid, civil liberty. May God, who is our helper, be yours also. And may we all, when we shall have finished our militant state, be crowned with immortal glory through Jesus Christ.

Amen.



Mr. BRIDGE'S A D D R E S S

PRECEDING, AND

C H A R G E

SUBSEQUENT TO THE SOLEMN SEPARATION OF
THE REV. LUTHER WRIGHT
TO THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL
MINISTRY.

OUR blessed Redeemer, having loved his church, and purchased it with his own most precious blood, and being clothed by the Father with all power in heaven and on earth, is pleased to make use of his dignity and authority for the benefit of the *faithful*, the *called* and *chosen*. This he manifests in the dispensations of his providence, and institutions of his grace; and particularly in appropriating an order of men to his own immediate service, and in commissioning them to the work of the ministry, the reconciliation of sinners to God, and the edifying the body of Christ.

To this honorable though arduous employ, dear Sir, we trust you are called of God, as well as by this church and flock: that He who knows the hearts of all men, sees you to be faithful, and sets you aside as holy for himself. We now therefore proceed, by prayer with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, to separate you to the sacred office.

WE the ministers of the gospel, having, agreeable to apostolic pattern and practice, separated you to the work of the ministry, do now view you as vested with the powers and privileges of an evangelical bishop. Particularly as authorized to preach the gospel, to administer the seals of the covenant, and the censures of the church; to pray with and for your people, and to bless them in the name of the Lord, and to assist in the separation of others to this important work. And we commit to your pastoral care and charge, this church and flock.

WE claim no authority over you, but in the arms of tenderest affection embrace you, as one of and equal with us, in the fellowship of the ministry of the gospel; yet being seniors in office, and particularly designated to this service, we now solemnly exhort and charge you, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that you take heed to the ministry you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it in all its various branches.—Particularly,

PREACH the word—the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of the gospel; and teach not for doctrines the commandments of men. Preach Christ crucified, and determine to know nothing in competition with, or opposition to him.

GIVE yourself to reading, meditation and prayer; especially to a diligent search of the sacred volume, and to earnest prayer, that you may be

led into the truth as it is in Jesus, and be able to build up this church and flock, upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

STUDY to shew yourself approved of God, a workman that need not be ashamed ; rightly dividing the word of truth ; reproof, rebuking and exhorting in season, and out of season, with all long suffering and doctrine.

TAKE heed to the whole flock over whom the Holy Ghost maketh you an overseer. Feed the sheep, and feed the lambs. Warn every man, and instruct every man ; that you may be free from the blood of all. Deliver as you are able the whole counsel of God ; keep back nothing that shall be profitable to them. Take the oversight of them, not by constraint but willingly ; not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be a helper of their joys.

TAKE heed to yourself, as well as to your doctrine and flock. Be strict and frequent in examining into the truth, reality and growth of religion in your own soul. Though you are made a keeper of the vineyard, yet your own vineyard you may by no means neglect. Shew yourself a pattern of good works. Be an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

As a faithful steward of Christ's household, administer the sacraments of the new-testament, to the duly qualified subjects. Give Christ's bread to his children.

DISPENSE the holy discipline of Christ in his church, with all gravity and firmness. Do nothing by partiality, nor as having men's persons in admiration by reason of advantage. Whenever you are regularly invited, commit the trust you now receive to faithful men, who are able to teach others also. Lay hands suddenly on no man. Keep thyself pure.

THE doctrine of the glorious gospel of the blessed God is committed to your trust. Keep the sacred depositum by the Holy Ghost pure and entire. You are set for its defence ; be valiant therefore for the truth. Endure hardness as a good soldier. Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ.

ESPECIALLY give yourself to prayer, as well as to the ministry of the word. It is with God to make you an able, faithful and successful minister of the new-testament ; to enable you to preach the gospel, not merely with the wisdom of words, but with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

THUS, reverend and dear Sir, we exhort and charge you, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom. And we assure you, that if you obtain grace to keep this commandment and charge, without spot and unrebukeable, great shall be your reward in heaven. Though Israel should not be gathered, you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of our Father. AMEN.

THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
BY THE
REVEREND MR. PRENTISS,
OF MEDFIELD.

IN the presence of God, of holy angels, and of this assembly, a pastor having now, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, been regularly set over this church, and people; it only remains, that by the customary, and significant sign, of giving the right hand, we express our brotherly communion.

THIS part of the service of the day devolved on me, by the venerable council here convened, I shall discharge in few words.

ACCEPT, then, my brother, the hand I now present you. Be assured we mean it, not as a matter of mere form, and compliment, but as a pledge of sincere affection. We hereby promise, and engage whatever you can reasonably expect to receive from us, in a way of counsel, and assistance; and while you accept the tender of the social hand, allow us, in return, to claim all the

D

kind, and brotherly offices, it may be convenient for us to receive, and proper for you to afford.

THE work, in which we are engaged, is, in its nature, confessedly arduous, and difficult. Let us, according to our opportunity, and ability, contribute to strengthen each others hands, and encourage each others hearts, unitedly seeking to fulfil the ministry we have received from our common Lord.

As servants of one Master, as brethren, equal in office, and authority, we have no claim to dominion over each other ; but by reciprocal offices of love, are to recommend that amiable, that fundamental grace, which our religion inculcates. We are bound to feel a joyful satisfaction in, and cheerfully to promote each others gifts, acceptance, fidelity, and usefulness.

WE congratulate you, Sir, on your introduction to the work of the ministry ; cordially do we wish you a long, a comfortable, and useful period of service, in this part of the Christian vineyard ; and when you shall have finished your course, together with the ministry you have now received in the Lord, may you have, from the chief Shepherd, a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

THE transactions on this occasion sufficiently evince, that we acknowledge and receive this church, as a regular, professed branch of the mystical body of Christ.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

WITH satisfaction I look back to the time, when on an occasion, like the present, I received the fellowship of ministers, and churches, by the hand of your late aged pastor, whom God was pleased to continue in the active service of the vineyard more than threescore, and in pastoral relation to you seventy years.*

WE have sympathized with you in the changes, which have past over you, since the venerable prophet's head was laid in the dust.

WE this day take part in the joy, that after several, unsuccessful, attempts for the resettlement of the gospel, Providence has furnished one to take the oversight of you, in whom your affections so generally harmonize.

HE has now, solemnly bound himself to be your servant for *Jesus'* sake. It is your part, to aid, and encourage him in his work, by continued expressions of love, and esteem ; by a steady, devout attendance on his ministrations ; by treating him, ever, in character as a minister of Christ ; by bearing him on your hearts at the throne of grace ; especially by giving him the high and exalted satisfaction, to see, that his labors among you are not in vain in the Lord.

MAY you, and your pastor walk together in harmony, and love ; in constant pursuit of the

* *Rev. Nathaniel Bucknam.*

great business, regular discharge of the important duties, and full participation of the sublime comforts of religion, in the present world, and be each others joy, and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. To him be glory forever, AMEN.

